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STATE FOR EEB/TPP/MTAA/ABT - JACK BOBO AND MARCELLA SZYMANSKI

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [TBIO](#) [ETRD](#) [EAID](#) [UP](#)

SUBJECT: EMBASSY KYIV PROPOSED BIOTECH OUTREACH STRATEGY

REFS: A. STATE 122732 B. Kyiv 2018

¶1. (U) Summary. Embassy Kyiv requests \$9,509.00 for public outreach activities to promote a science-based discussion of agricultural biotechnology in Ukraine. Given wide-spread negative attitudes towards the use of biotechnology and legislative efforts to restrict its applications in Ukraine, Embassy Kyiv proposes further engagement of policymakers, scientists, and journalists. Building on our program in 2009 (ref B), Post plans to organize a speaker program that would include conferences, workshops, and media outreach in Kyiv, Poltava, and Odesa. End summary.

Ukrainian Attitudes towards Biotechnology

¶2. (U) Public opinion about agricultural biotechnology in Ukraine is almost unanimously negative, resulting from persistent knowledge gaps and negative information campaigns. Concerns about the quality and long-term health implications of products produced with biotechnology have not been adequately addressed by government regulators, scientific researchers, or the media. Moreover, Ukrainian legislators have recently crafted new legislation that, if adopted, would institute a complete ban on importation and domestic production of biotech materials in Ukraine.

Proposed Activities

¶3. (U) In light of the negative attitudes toward biotechnology in Ukraine and pending legislation to restrict its use, Post proposes to invite an American speaker to Ukraine to participate in a conference dedicated to the safety of biotechnologically produced food products. The speaker would also conduct guest lectures, town hall meetings, and press events. Ideally, s/he would possess expertise in human health, genetics, environmental science, plant varieties, and global market trends.

¶4. (U) Post envisions a five-day program, anchored by a conference on the safety of agricultural biotechnology in Kyiv. Other events would include guest lectures at local universities, town hall meetings, and press events and would be held in Kyiv, central Ukraine (Poltava) and southwestern Ukraine (Odesa). [Note: Dr. Yaroslav Blume, a renowned Ukrainian agricultural biotechnology expert proposed Dr. Nina Fedoroff, the Science and Technology Advisor to the U.S. Secretary of State, as a speaker at a conference on the safety of biotech food products. Post believes that Dr. Fedoroff would be an ideal participant in the outreach program.]

¶5. (U) The proposed program would have three focus audiences:

a. The science community represented by students and faculty of local research institutes and universities. Past biotech outreach programs have shown the scientific community most receptive to the concept of biotechnology and interested in science-based discussion. It is important to foster attitudes which support science-based approaches within this community. The National Agricultural

University (NAU), with a main campus in Kyiv and satellite campuses across Ukraine, has indicated its willingness to host events.

b. The journalistic community. Media coverage of biotechnology is generally negative, reflecting the lack of knowledge of the subject and dearth of available information. Press events, possibly including exclusive TV interviews, press conferences, and workshops for journalists, could aid in educating local journalists about the science of agricultural biotechnology.

c. Policy makers. Despite their overall negative attitude, it is important to continue engaging Ukrainian policy makers. Ukrainian legislators have recently crafted new legislation that, if adopted, would institute a complete ban on importation and domestic production of biotech materials in Ukraine. The legislation has been passed by the Verkhovna Rada (parliament) and awaits the signature of the President to be adopted into law.

Proposed Budget

¶6. (U) Post estimates the following costs, in USD:

3,000.00	Roundtrip Airfare, US to Kyiv, Ukraine
300.00	Roundtrip Airfare to Odesa
720.00	Lodging, Kyiv (3 x 240/night)
420.00	Lodging, Other (3 x 140/night)
378.00	M&IE, Kyiv (3 x 126/day)
291.00	M&IE, Other (3 x 97/day)
1000.00	Ground Transportation (within Kyiv, Poltava, and Odesa; airport transfers, roundtrip transportation from Kyiv to Poltava)
1,400.00	Honorarium for the Speaker
1,500.00	Simultaneous Interpretation
500.00	Interpreter Travel Expenses

\$9509.00	TOTAL PROPOSED BUDGET

¶7. (U) Post Point of Contact:

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¶8. (U) Post wishes to thank EEB/TPP/MTAA/ABT staff for its ongoing support of Embassy Kyiv's biotechnology promotion efforts.